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ABSTRACT

The American ideal of liberal education affirms faith in the individual and in the human struggle against intellectual dishonesty and conformity and speaks to the intellectual integrity of education, of graduate faculty, and of the choices open to graduate students. However, humanists disagree on such issues as what the products of graduate education should be; whom graduate English education should serve; what characteristics graduate English programs should have; and who is qualified to make responsible choices without jeopardizing either professional integrity or individual freedom of choice. Graduate education in English should be a strong force for the resolution of social conflicts as it provides for cultural and intellectual diversity; it should provide graduate students opportunities to work toward the resolution of national problems. The format of such a graduate program might include courses in sociology, political science, psychobiology, history, art, and architecture, as well as apprenticeships in public service programs. (DF)

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FOR PUBLICATION ON ISSUES IN ENGLISH EDUCATION

ISSUE: ENGLISH EDUCATION AT THE GRADUATE LEVEL

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The American ideal of liberal education, defined by Ralph Waldo Emerson in his Representative Men, Nature, and Divinity School Address, affirms his faith in the individual and the human struggle against intellectual dishonesty and conformity. More recently, Professor Garrett Hardin, a biologist on the faculty of the University of California at Santa Barbara, attributes the moral dilemma of contemporary humankind to our simultaneous quest for individual freedom of choice and for the integrity of society as a whole. In his book, Exploring New Ethics for Survival, he further asserts that liberal learning is the most reliable means by which we can control our own destiny. What these men of two different ages say about the individual and about individual integrity in a social milieu that may be either hostile or supportive encompasses much that bears on dilemmas that we, as professional educators, need to recognize, if indeed on a less grand scale. They speak to the intellectual integrity of Education, of graduate faculty who provide the milieu in which these programs function, of the free choices open to students. The issues among us colleagues and fellow humanists stem from conflicting views of the following:

A. What the products of Graduate Education should be;

B. Whom Graduate Education (particularly English Education) should serve;

C. What characteristics our programs should have; and,

D. Who is qualified to make responsible choices without jeopardizing either professional or programmatic integrity or individual freedom of choice.

From this article, I hope that we may all reexamine our own professional and social perspectives, and that our junior colleagues (in English, particularly), knowing something of their academic and professional options, may make some judicious decisions about their own destinies.

WHAT THE PRODUCTS OF GRADUATE EDUCATION SHOULD BE

Few will disagree on the intrinsic and extrinsic value of graduate education in general. It should enhance opportunities for intellectual growth, for development of expertise, for theoretical and applied research and scholarship. Ideally, it should produce a well-informed citizenry with a will and a capacity to help resolve urgent national problems (among them, health, literacy, conservation, environmental controls, social planning, etc.) within a complex technological society. And I suspect that we can all agree that graduate education should also contribute to the elimination of discrimination based on race, sex, age, national origin, vocation, etc. But, more than that, graduate education in the humanities is, as it must continue to be, a strong force for the resolution of ethnic and ideological conflicts as it provides for cultural and intellectual diversity.

Obviously, neither higher education in general nor graduate education in particular is the <u>via ad astra</u>; graduate education (and especially graduate education in English) neither today nor tomorrow provides a vehicle for minimizing social or economic disparities. That universities continue to foster academic and intellectual caste systems and that so many of our finest minds belong to people who fail to communi-

cate publicly are most disconcerting. We have all witnessed, even among us humanists, the interdisciplinary and intradisciplinary Poyntonian "rows over their household gods" (Preface to Henry James' The Spoils of Poynton, a novel which has been referred to as a "story of cabinets, chairs, and tables") and what Henry James called the "drawing room violence" of academe. Were academic constituencies and cliques based in zealous philosophical differences, the intellectual climate of our universities would be markedly healthier and certainly more in touch with the mission we profess to serve. But universities, like all of our human insitutions, are bound to be short of the Emersonian ideal. The ideal, by definition, assumes low degrees of fallibility. There is, however, some stronger force that pervades to guarantee the future of graduate education--a vision of what humans can, should and will be as individuals and as cultures.

WHOM GRADUATE EDUCATION (PARTICULARLY ENGLISH EDUCATION) SHOULD SERVE

I maintain that graduate education is the single most important contributing factor to the cultural and material well-being of a nation. And apparently some people in Washington agree that its influence should be broad. The federal government has taken steps to protect the freedom of choice and to encourage the adaptive capacities of the nation's universities. Adaptation in graduate education today is a matter not of choice, but of survival.

A report of the National Board of Graduate Education, published under the title "Outlook and Opportunities for Graduate Education"

(December, 1975) predicted the following:

1. A steady reduction in demand for new PhD's to serve as college and university faculty members through the 1980's;
2. A substantially reduced rate of growth in appropriations for research and development, and consequently reduced growth rates of demands for PhD's in such activities;
3. A considerable adjustment in various graduate program enrollments that will reduce employment opportunities for new PhD's (some programs will grow, others will deplete);
4. A continuing decline in funds for support of graduate students, thereby increasing the relative importance of loans and self-support; (Federal support for fellowships and traineeships for graduate students has declined 57% in the last ten years. In real dollars /considering inflation, etc./ institutional support nation-wide has declined 5% per year for the last six years.)
5. Some increased enrollments of "non-traditional" graduate students (older students, part-time or non-residential or non-degree or second-career students, or any combination of these categories); and,
6. continued focus on accountability, including program evaluation and cost analyses.

The National Board on Graduate Education has asserted in its publication, Federal Policy Alternatives toward Graduate Education

(Washington, D. C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1974, pp. 25-26) that

> a national goal in graduate education for the next decade should be the accentuation...of <u>differential</u> strengths, not the continuation of trends toward a monolithic system modeled on a Harvard or a Berkeley pattern.

And again, its guidelines admonish

> Every graduate program worth maintaining should be justified clearly and unambiguously in terms of its particular purposes served, and these should not be vague and rhetorical, but highly specific and backed up by hard data. (p. 70)

If a program claims to be serving the local community, there should be data on continuing education and part-time programs and enrollments, and there should be graduate student career follow-ups. (p. 50)

If a program claims to be turning out research scholars, there should be evidence that graduate faculty are consistently and currently productive scholars themselves and that appropriate physical and material resources are available to serve those students.

In a recent article, Robert L. Jacobson summarizes a report of a panel with recommendations on evaluation criteria for non-traditional programs. The panel, charged by the Council on Postsecondary Accreditation, was responding to a demand of educators for assurances "of quality in such programs, which range from off-campus degrees and independent-study arrangements to so-called 'competency-based' instruc-

tion....The study group...has determined that all institutions would benefit from a new and common approach to accreditation that would give greater weight to measures of 'educational accomplishment and performance' than to traditional assessments." It indicts higher education for failure to measure its degree of success in terms of outcomes, the products it graduates. Indeed, Grover J. Andrews, Associate Executive Secretary of the College Commission of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools and director of this 18-month study, insists that traditional educators may be in a better position to improve the effectiveness of their own programs. (The Chronicle of Higher Education, "Panel Calls for Greater Emphasis on 'Outcomes'" - October 10, 1978.) This movement to redesign standards to reflect programmatic outcomes (the students and student needs served) may well warrant the attention of those of us in graduate education, in English graduate education especially, and may well demand that we take a long-range look at the achievements of our alumni. Few have taken that long-range look at graduates at the baccalaureate level (Wm H. Evans of Purdue University, Geneva Meers of Cornell College, and Dorothy Bestor of the University of Washington are obvious exceptions), fewer at the graduate level. The intensity and the breadth of the demand to determine whom graduate education must serve become clear in the Canadian report of Susan Carson and Mark Nichols reprinted in Atlas World Press Review (Sept., 1978, pp. 40-41). The student movement in Canada from the liberal arts to "areas in which they feel opportunities may be greatest, i.e., law and medicine is marked."

In Winnipeg, several dozen jobless university graduates formed the Winnepeg Association of Unemployed University Graduates (membership c. 50% baccalaureates and 50% post-baccalaureates), advertized their plight and, as Vivian Rachlis, an English Graduate product and founder of the Association, said, "Our first priority is bringing about a limitation in university enrollments...." Clearly, many of those whom graduate education has served are sitting by the economic roadside; for those in English, those who had expected to teach and those who had been led to believe that the life of the closetted scholar was the summum bonum, the road is not promising.

WHAT CHARACTERISTICS PROGRAMS IN ENGLISH EDUCATION SHOULD HAVE

Whereas federal influence on graduate education is primarily fiscal (support for graduate students and for research), state agencies have responsibility for staffing and programmatic policies. During the 1960's this meant concentration on a <u>single purpose</u> of graduate education in a particular institution; it meant, for example, that if a graduate program in theoretical linguistics was established and was meeting the needs of the system at Urbana, any graduate program in linguistics elsewhere would necessarily have an applied emphasis.

In English, it meant a single university would cater to the needs of prospective public school teachers or in-service school teachers, where English Educators were ensconced in an English Department or in a College of Education Department of Secondary Education. Each constituent unit would vie for the faculty and the student credit

hours. The Education departments wanted the faculty because of their conviction that a methodological framework was essential; English Departments wanted the faculty and programs because enrollments were high in the English Education tracks and could bring in state dollars to support ever-diminishing enrollments in traditional graduate English programs. And, the inevitable conflicts arose not only between the state-wide planning and coordinating committees and the universities, and between Education and English Departments, but also between the traditional literary and the language/rhetoric camps within English Departments.

During the sixties, linguists seceded--much as journalists, dramatists, speech and reading specialists had done years before--and many for the same reasons. (At my own university we even have a college of communication that may one day realize that English language, composition and rhetoric are, in fact, communication disciplines with theoretical and praxiological bases. Indeed, there are rare instances in which faculty of the English Department of the College of Liberal Arts work closely with colleagues in Linguistics, Theatre, Speech, Cinematography--or Reading in the College of Education--but those who do are not the "serious scholars;" they are the exceptions, often the "mavericks.") Were such fragmentation and conflicts philosophical rather than territorial, the academic structure and programs in English Departments today might well have been stronger and more responsive to the needs of students, both undergraduate and graduate.

As many of us have observed, there are graduate programs in English that offer few options for the students who seek something other than the traditional literary analysis route. But the programmatic power base is often with the faculty of English Departments who see themselves as literary scholars; many feel threatened by change; many come from an academic background that demanded great intellectual resilience while it paradoxically nurtured a strange sort of insularity.

Literary scholarship, unlike scientific scholarship which is generally committed to the uncovering of new principles and the development of new devices, is in many ways relatively static. It focuses on stars that are "fixed" or "crossed," but in any event have been rooted in the past, a past revealed in Greek and Roman literature, thought and history, and in philology. In the days of John Livingston Lowes, this meant that critical analysis conformed to a rigid and systematic set of criteria designed to reveal to the astute literary scholar (and to identify him as astute and scholarly) the prosaic devices, eternal verities and sources. The prominence of Irving Babbitt and Arthur Lovejoy on the literary and philosophical scene gave rise to a study of literature as a record of the evolution of ideas--ethical, religious, political and/or sociological. Indeed, as Douglas Bush points out ("Literature, the Academy, and the Public," Daedalus, Fall 1978, pp. 165-174), "much valuable work of this kind had been done in the nineteenth century; for later students of English, however, that activity had been checked." Students were permitted no such emotional involvement or

crusading.

Although it had begun somewhat earlier, the New Criticism gained prominence with T.S. Eliot and I.A. Richards, demanding intensive study of a literary work for aesthetic devices and effects. It exacted disciplined scrutiny, concentrated analysis, refined (if narrow) perception. It was this "New" Criticism that dominated the 1920's and 930's, along with the "archetypal" or "myth-and-symbol" approach of the 1940's, that characterized the formal training of most in-service English professors today. The publication of Northrup Frye's Anatomy of Criticism (1957) and The Secular Scripture: A Study of the Structure of Romance (1976) provides a panorama of modes, myths, symbols, genres and romance. Indeed, as Douglas Bush observes

> We are dazzled by Frye's range of active knowledge, inexhaustible fertility in ideas, and taxonomic genius, although we may feel undernourished in his objective, schematic and purely verbal or literary universe which seems to have no clear ethical or aesthetic base and only a tenuous connection with life. (IBID, p. 168)

And then the summary, both a remonstration and a literary compline:

> A glance over the modern evolution of scholarly literary criticism makes clear its increasing, self-created isolation from the general reading public.... During the last two generations serious criticism

> has increasingly become the preserve of academic, professional students of literature, specialists in this or that period or area or individual author ....inspired mainly by professional ambition and pressure....What matters most is that scholarly specialists write almost wholly for fellow specialists. Like the critical theorists...and increasingly under their influence, they remain aloof from the interests and grasp of the common readers. Many of the sheep may not be very hungry, but many presumably are, and they are not much fed.
>
> (IBID., pp. 170-171)

In brief, the scholar's duty, in writing as in the classroom, is to arouse and to satisfy literary hunger. As Bush asks, "Or are some modern classroom operations related to the declining appeal of the humanities?"

Thus, the shifts in perspective that characterized the formal training of many university literary scholars and English professors seem not to have expanded their areas of interest and social commitment, but to have focussed them more narrowly; not to broaden and enhance their areas of communication and influence, but to constrain them in many ways; not to prepare them to lead a large community of readers, but to inculcate in the few the same quantitative (and sometimes qualitative) limitations. (Interestingly enough, many graduate schools of business are initiating courses in "business ethics;" students might be learning

their ethical theories and models from literature, the literature that some scholar is analyzing for imagery.) The evolution of professional insularity in English education is what we might well have expected from a graduate program to which students were expected to mold themselves--such as those that pervaded the 1930's, 1940's, and 1950's. Unfortunately, many English graduate programs today make mere token payments to flexibility that could produce humanists with social consciences and political souls. And this is not a matter of quid pro quo; it is not a matter of programmatic purfle. There is room for the literary scholar, the critic, the English teacher, the mass communications specialist, the rhetorician, the dialectologist, the psycholinguist, the theorist and the practitioner.

Because literary scholarship is so demanding, many English professors are less aware than one might hope of contemporary language theories and models for analysis and of the distinctions between rhetorical theory and composition teaching. As a result, graduate students who seek a broader base of training have few options beyond what are sometimes called "umbrella courses" (because they provide rubrics for special readings, special topics, individual projects, etc.). While umbrellas provide an element of shelter to which the non-traditional English graduate student may on occasion retreat, they also appear to be keeping the traditionalists out in the rain. And it is good to know when to come in out of the rain.

The federal cry urges States "to encourage the diversity and differentiation that should be the hallmark of the 1970's and 1980's."

(National Board of Graduate Education, Outlooks and Opportunities for Graduate Education, December, 1975, p. 55) But there is a difference between fragmentation and diversification. The former has led to departmental and programmatic proliferation, to communication gaps, and to academic provincialism in graduate English Education. The latter does not imply division; it can help to revitalize graduate faculty, to broaden graduate English programs, and to excite many graduate students in English and in other fields enough to involve themselves actively in reading more broadly, to recognize literature for what it is and for what it must be in a society that values individual freedom and social integrity, and to see literature in whatever field as the record of the best and the worst of the human experience. The process has begun in some institutions, but in far too few.

WHO IS QUALIFIED TO MAKE RESPONSIBLE CHOICES WITHOUT JEOPARDIZING THE INTEGRITY OF THE PROFESSION OR THE PROGRAM OR THE FREEDOM OF CHOICE FOR THE INDIVIDUAL?

Curriculum Committees that ordinarily design graduate programs in English and/or English Education are ordinarily composed of traditionally-oriented graduate faculty of English Departments or of satellite constituencies of "refugees" from some of the rigid, traditional programs. It seems obvious that whatever has been designed and implemented has not, in fact, worked. Our graduate English programs have not produced the literary scholars they were meant to replicate; fewer than eight percent publish after graduate school. The English Educators have not led a massive reading movement. We have neither guaranteed the integrity of our

programs nor have we created a milieu in which research and responsible choice for graduate study has flourished. Some critics have gone so far as to say we have failed in a "public trust," a charge that is difficult to refute in the face of massive marginal literacy, a book market sales crisis and graduate student disenchantment and dissatisfaction.

Some of us have long insisted that our mission is to produce scholars of literature or of pedagogy and, as a matter of fact, it may well be; if so, our successes have been isolated. If we do see our mission in these terms, we may well be nurturing a conformity against which, by Emersonian definition, the univeristy is meant to help the individual struggle. And that, in turn, is intellectually dishonest.

If the products of a graduate program in English/English Education are to have had opportunities for intellectual growth, if they are to have developed expertise in an area or areas, if they are to have become well-informed citizens with a will and a capacity to help resolve national problems, ideological and social conflicts, then the program should reflect these goals. More than that, the professionals involved in directing and implementing such programs should clearly manifest in word and behavior more than rhetorical commitment to these goals. And evaluation of student competence and programmatic success should reflect these goals. The format of Graduate English Education might change considerably.

Such a program might include options such as special courses in sociology, in political science, in psychobiology, in history, in art and architecture as well as in language, literature (and literacy) and critical

theory. It might conceivably involve apprenticeships in therapeutic communities with residents preparing to take General Education Development Equivalency Examinations for high school diplomas; in special services agencies doing reading for the blind, or learning to function as interpreters for the deaf; in communities of migrant workers with children who need schooling and with adults whose native language is not English; in legal aid programs where special use of the language is an essential skill; in local libraries where reading programs for children and for adults are sorely needed; in planning councils and developmental agencies where close reading and technical writing and interpretation are imperative. And these need involve neither experiential credit nor dilution of language and literature disciplines. Such options, however, would provide opportunities for graduate students to develop the capacity and to manifest the will to work toward the resolution of national problems. They would perhaps sensitize prospective scholars to the need for a kind of humanistic involvement that does not preclude the critical analysis of literature; on the contrary, it may well enhance analytical capabilities.

What would such a curriculum committee entail? It might well assemble representatives from among literary scholars, pedagogic scholars and learning theorists, theoretical and applied linguists, trade journalists, experts in the language of law, speech and psycho-therapists from a variety of agencies, alumni from graduate programs, social scientists, dramatists and mass communication specialists. All have contributions to make to the choices an individual student (of intellectual integrity responsible for his own destiny) may make. Those choices and the design of that program would be based on questions that the individual will have to confront.

Why do you want to attend graduate school? (Few come to learn to write the great American novel and few come because of parental pressures. Many don't know what else to do; jobs are scarce or boring and graduate school offers a change of scene. Liberating education will have already begun if a student makes such an analysis of motives; and this analysis and conclusion must be candid in a non-intimidating environment.)

What are some of your fundamental philosophical commitments? (A requirement certainly would be that a responsible individual making choices about personal, social, political and aesthetic values be prepared to manifest those commitments programmatically.)

What kinds of experiences (personal, academic, social, political and aesthetic) can most effectively help you as a humanist in a milieu that will not always be supportive.

What would life-long learning mean in terms of the quality of your life and, if indeed you are your brother's keeper, of those whose lives you touch? (Implicit here is an assumption that any education ought to inculcate a commitment to life-long learning and an awareness that traditional life styles and "innovative" life styles do not necessarily involve battles between the forces of good and evil.)

A word about the marketplace for products of graduate English Education is most certainly in order. Research and predictions based on actuarian tables are less than encouraging for teachers. Indeed, the current age distribution of English and English Education faculty members in American universities and colleges suggests there will be little turnover in the next ten to fifteen years. As reduced enrollments continue, the average age of entrenched English/English Education faculties will increase significantly. The American Council of Learned Societies has taken some steps to insure a steady flow of young scholars in the humanities generally (c. 30 a year) who are not more than five years beyond the doctorate. A similar fellowship program, Careers in Business, sponsored by the National Endowment for the Humanities, is in its second year. This program is committed to indoctrination of new PhDs in the humanities for middle management positions in business. Were our graduate programs in English/English Education producing the Emersonian-models, such post-graduate indoctrination would be redundant because of the early involvement of those students in making the choices that define their own destinies and make appropriate commitments to societal integrity.

Problems are many. The context of the graduate experience in English/English Education would be fluid by design; the student undertaking the planning would be making choices within guidelines that are relatively liberal. This is inevitably threatening to the student, the faculty and non-academic participants. Programs would be as varied as the number of students, and the mechanics for administering them demanding. It may not be "the only way to go" but it may be one of the ways to guarantee freedom of choice, to nurture intellectual honesty on the part of the student and the profession, and to clear some communication lines that have long failed to function between the academic community and the "real world."